

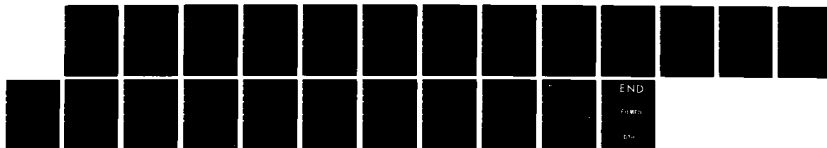
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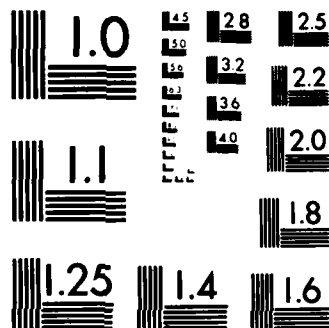
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# Electrostatic Ion Cyclotron Instability Due to a Nonuniform Electric Field Perpendicular to the External Magnetic Field

G. GANGULI AND Y. C. LEE\*

*Science Applications International Corporation  
McLean, VA 22102*

*\*University of Maryland  
College Park, MD 20740*

P. PALMADESSO

*Geophysical and Plasma Dynamics Branch  
McLean, VA 22102*

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# ELECTROSTATIC ION CYCLOTRON INSTABILITY DUE TO A NONUNIFORM ELECTRIC FIELD PERPENDICULAR TO THE EXTERNAL MAGNETIC FIELD

## I. Introduction

The ion cyclotron instability has been of importance to both space and laboratory plasmas. In most previous studies, field aligned currents or ion beams have been cited as the driving mechanism<sup>1</sup>. Recently some laboratory experiments<sup>2</sup> have reported ion cyclotron instability in circumstances in which neither of the above mechanisms provides a satisfactory free energy source, and the existence of a two dimensional electric field is conjectured to play a role. Further, unstable ion cyclotron waves have been reported in connection with double layers<sup>3</sup> and electrostatic shocks<sup>4</sup>. In all these cases a localized electric field perpendicular to the external magnetic field is an intrinsic feature of the equilibrium. The purpose of this letter is to report a new kinetic ion cyclotron instability driven by a nonuniform electric field perpendicular to the external magnetic field which could be of importance to the situations referred above<sup>2-4</sup>.

## II. Theory and Results

Using physical arguments we first establish that an equilibrium characterized by an external uniform magnetic field  $B_0$  (in the  $z$  direction) perpendicular to an external nonuniform electric field  $E_0(x)$  (in the  $x$  direction) is unstable to the electrostatic ion cyclotron waves. The local dispersion relation of the electrostatic ion cyclotron waves<sup>5</sup> is given by,

$$D(\omega, k) = 1 + \tau + \sum \Gamma_n(\underline{b}) \left\{ \frac{\omega}{|k_{\parallel}| v_i} \right\} Z \left\{ \frac{\omega - n\Omega_i}{|k_{\parallel}| v_i} \right\} + \tau \left\{ \frac{\omega}{|k_{\parallel}| v_e} \right\} Z \left\{ \frac{\omega}{|k_{\parallel}| v_e} \right\} = 0 \quad (1)$$

where  $(k\lambda_i)^2 \ll 1$  is assumed. Also  $\tau = T_i/T_e$ ,  $v_{i,e}$  are the ion and electron thermal velocities,  $\Omega_i = eB_0/m_i c$  is the ion gyro radius,  $k_{\parallel}$  and  $k_{\perp}$  are the parallel and perpendicular components of the wave vector (with respect to  $B_0$ ),  $\Gamma_n(\underline{b}) = I_n(\underline{b}) \exp(-\underline{b})$ ,  $\underline{b} = k_{\perp}^2 \rho_i^2 / 2$ ,  $\rho_i = v_i / \Omega_i$  and  $I_n$  are the modified Bessel's functions. Setting  $k_{\parallel} \rightarrow 0$  one obtains the dispersion relation for the Bernstein modes (BM),

$$D_{BM}(\omega, k) = 1 - \tau_0 - \sum_{n>0} \frac{2\omega^2}{\omega^2 - n^2\Omega_i^2} \Gamma_n = 0, \quad (2)$$

and if  $(\omega/v_e) \ll k_y \ll (\omega - n\Omega_i)/v_i$ , then one gets the corresponding expression for the ion cyclotron modes (IC),

$$D_{IC}(\omega, k) = 1 + \tau - \Gamma_0 - \sum_{n>0} \frac{2\omega^2 \Gamma_n}{\omega^2 - n^2 \Omega_i^2} = 0. \quad (3)$$

For the time being we neglect all the natural dampings. In the local approximation the energy density of the electrostatic waves is proportional to  $\partial(\omega D)/\partial\omega \approx \omega \partial D/\partial\omega$ . Thus the energy density  $U$ , of both the BM & IC waves is given by

$$U \propto \omega(\partial D/\partial\omega) = \omega \left\{ \sum_{n>0} \frac{4\Gamma_n n^2 \Omega_i^2}{(\omega^2 - n^2 \Omega_i^2)^2} \right\} = \omega^2 \sigma(\omega), \quad \sigma > 0. \quad (4)$$

Clearly  $U$  is positive definite and thus the waves are positive energy waves.

We now introduce a uniform electric field  $E_0$  in the  $x$  direction. This initiates a drift of magnitude  $V_E = cE/B$  in the  $y$  direction. Thus, other than a Doppler shift (i.e.,  $\omega \rightarrow \omega_1 = \omega - k_y V_E$ ) there is no change in the dispersion relations given in (2) and (3). The energy density of the Doppler shifted waves  $U'$ , is given by,

$$U' = \omega_1 \sigma(\omega_1). \quad (5)$$

While  $U$  is positive definite  $U'$  can be negative provided  $0 < \omega < k_y V_E$  thereby giving the waves a negative energy density.

Clearly a uniform electric field perpendicular to the external magnetic field can convert the positive energy waves into negative energy waves. However, as long as the electric field is uniform, a transformation to another frame moving with a velocity  $V_E$  will enable the waves to get back the positive energy character. This is no longer possible once the electric field is nonuniform. For example consider a specific model for the external electric field,

$$E_0(x) = \begin{cases} E_0, & -\frac{L}{2} < x < \frac{L}{2} \\ 0, & \text{otherwise} \end{cases}.$$



As the main objective of this letter is to demonstrate and discuss the new instability we have chosen a somewhat idealized electric field profile for relative ease in computation and transparency of the physics involved. Since  $E$  is localized in  $x$  over a distance  $L$  ( $L > \rho_i$ ), one finds that a negative wave energy region I, is surrounded by positive wave energy regions II (See Figure 1). A nonlocal wave packet can couple these regions and a flow of energy from region I to region II can enable the mode to grow. This gives rise to the instability. This is essentially a nonlocal instability with no local limit. The negative energy wave framework has been previously used<sup>6</sup> to explain other plasma instabilities at a local level. Ours is a nonlocal instability similar in concept with Lau<sup>7</sup> et. al who apply this concept to an astrophysical problem.

Since the  $x$  direction is nonuniform we use nonlocal differential equations<sup>5</sup> in the regions I and II to analyze this case. Dissipation processes such as Landau damping are now included.

$$\text{REGION - I:} \quad \left\{ \frac{\partial^2}{\partial \xi^2} + \kappa_I^2 \right\} \phi_I(\xi) = 0, \quad (6)$$

$$\text{REGION - II:} \quad \left\{ \frac{\partial^2}{\partial \xi^2} + \kappa_{II}^2 \right\} \phi_{II}(\xi) = 0, \quad (7)$$

where  $\xi = x/\rho_i$ ,  $\kappa_I^2 = Q_I/A_I$  and

$$Q_I = 1 + \tau + \sum \Gamma_n \left\{ \frac{\omega_1}{|k_{\parallel}|v_i} \right\} Z \left\{ \frac{\omega_1 - n\Omega_i}{|k_{\parallel}|v_i} \right\} + \tau \left\{ \frac{\omega_1}{|k_{\parallel}|v_e} \right\} Z \left\{ \frac{\omega_1}{|k_{\parallel}|v_e} \right\}, \quad (8)$$

$$A_I = -\frac{1}{2} \sum \Gamma_n \left\{ \frac{\omega_1}{|k_{\parallel}|v_i} \right\} Z \left\{ \frac{\omega_1 - n\Omega_i}{|k_{\parallel}|v_i} \right\}, \quad (9)$$

$$\Gamma_n' = \frac{\partial}{\partial b} \Gamma_n, \quad b = k_y^2 \rho_i^2 / 2.$$

$\kappa_{II}^2$  is identical to  $\kappa_I^2$  if  $\omega_1$  is replaced by  $\omega$ . The solutions in region I is,

$$\phi_I(\xi) = \phi_{oI} \cos(\kappa_I \xi), \quad (10)$$

while in region -II it is,

$$\phi_{II}(\xi) = \phi_{oII} \exp(i\kappa_{II} \xi + i\delta), \quad (11)$$

where  $\phi_{oI}, \phi_{oII}$  and  $\delta$  are constants. Demanding that the logarithmic derivative of the solutions be continuous at  $\xi = L/2\rho_1$  we obtain the nonlocal dispersion relation,

$$-\kappa_I \tan(\kappa_I/2\varepsilon) = i\kappa_{II}, \quad (12)$$

where  $\varepsilon = \rho_1/L$ . Given the parameters, we use a numerical root finder to solve (12) for the complex frequency  $\omega$ . As a boundary condition we demand that the solution vanish at  $\infty$ , i.e.,  $\text{Im}(\kappa_{II}) > 0$ . It should be remarked that since the electric field has a sharp profile our treatment at the second order differential equation level can be improved by employing an integral equation formulation. However, such a formulation is mathematically cumbersome and does not provide a simple and clear interpretation of the physics involved. Thus, for the time being, we stress simplicity and clarity over greater accuracy which will be provided in the future.

Figure 2 is a plot of the real and imaginary parts of the frequency,  $\omega_r/\Omega$  and  $\gamma/\Omega$ , against  $b$  for  $\tau = 0.$ ,  $V_E = 2.9v_1$ ,  $\varepsilon = 0.3$ ,  $u = k_{\parallel}/k_y = 0.001$  and  $\mu = m_i/m_e = 1837$ . The instability exists only for a very narrow band of  $k_y$  thereby making it very coherent. The real part of the frequency is large ( $\omega \sim 1.60\Omega_1$ ) compared to the first harmonic. Also the instability peaks for  $k\rho_1 \sim 0(1)$ . These features are in keeping with the observations of Mozer<sup>4</sup> et. al.

Figure 3 is a plot of  $\gamma/\Omega_1$  against  $u$  for  $\tau = 0, 0.5$  and  $1.0$  and  $b = 0.57$  while other parameters are similar to the Figure 2. Clearly this instability prefers small  $u$  (perpendicular propagation), again in keeping with Mozer et. al<sup>4</sup>. For  $\tau = 0$ ,  $u$  can get as high as  $0.15$  but for higher  $\tau$  the value of  $u$  is even smaller. For  $u \sim 0.01$  larger  $\tau$  implies

more electron Landau damping which reduces the growth rate.

Figure 4 is a plot of  $\omega$  against  $\epsilon$  for  $u = 10^{-4}$  and other parameters similar to Figure 2. Our theory at the second order differential equation level is valid for  $\epsilon < 1$  (i.e.,  $\rho_i < L$ ). For  $\rho_i > L$  situations an integral equation formulation will become necessary. For most of the laboratory experiments  $L \sim (2 \text{ to } 3)\rho_i$ , for which our theory holds. Figure 3 indicates that the instability is more severe for smaller  $L$  (i.e., for strongly localized electric fields) and disappears for  $L > 7\rho_i$ , for the given parameter range.

Figure 5 is a plot of  $\gamma/\Omega_i$  against  $\bar{V}_E (= V_E/v_i)$  for  $b = 0.57$ ,  $\tau = 1.0$ ,  $\epsilon = 0.3$  and  $u = 10^{-4}$ . The instability exists for  $\bar{V}_E$  between 2.8 and 3.2 peaking at around 3. The peak value of  $\bar{V}_E$  in both Mozer et al.<sup>4</sup> and Merlino et al.<sup>3</sup> is well above the minimum necessary for this instability. Further,  $\omega_i \approx -\Omega_i$  is necessary for the onset.

### III. Conclusions

In this letter we give a new mechanism that can explain the occurrence of the short wavelength ( $k\rho_i \sim 1$ ) turbulence around the ion cyclotron frequency in the presence of a nonuniform electric field perpendicular to the external magnetic field. This instability is driven by the coupling of the positive and negative energy ion cyclotron waves. Ion cyclotron turbulence has been observed associated with shocks<sup>4</sup> in the magnetosphere and with double layers<sup>3</sup> both in laboratory and space plasmas, where a strongly localized electric field perpendicular to the magnetic field is present. Thus the instability mechanism described in this letter could play a significant role in such situations. We would also like to note that the mechanism of the instability given here is general and can be applied to other instabilities as well. For example, a study of lower hybrid wave excitation by this mechanism is in progress and will be the subject of a future article

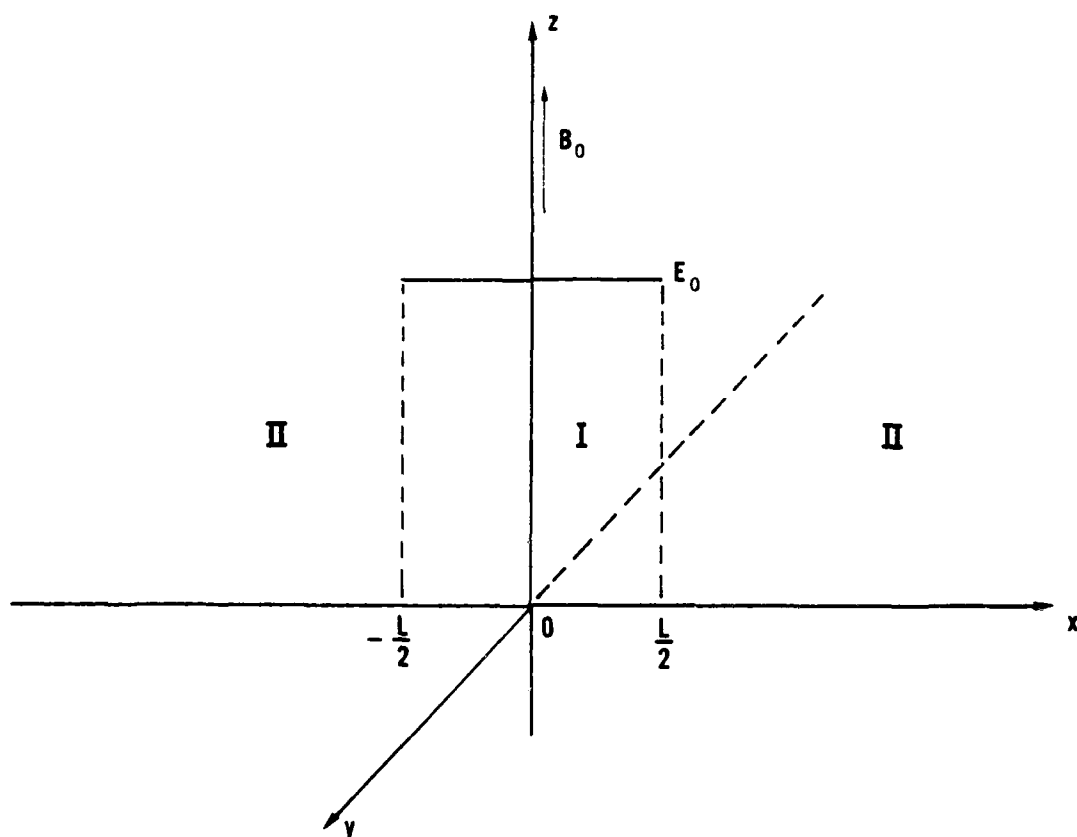


Figure 1. A sketch of the electric field model.

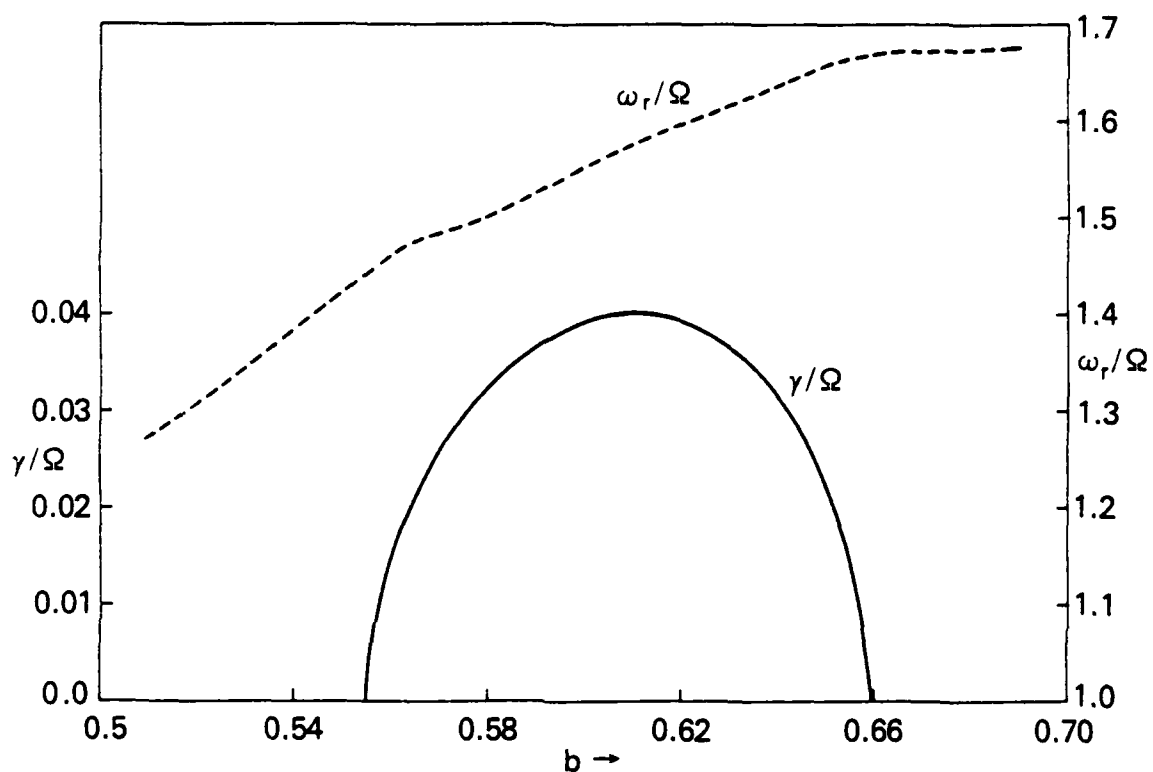


Figure 2. A plot of the real and imaginary part of the wave frequency  $\omega_r/\Omega_i$  and  $\gamma/\Omega_i$  against  $b$ . Here  $\tau = 0$ ,  $V_E = 2.9$ ,  $\epsilon = 0.3$ ,  $\mu \approx m_i/m_e = 1837$  and  $u = 10^{-3}$ .

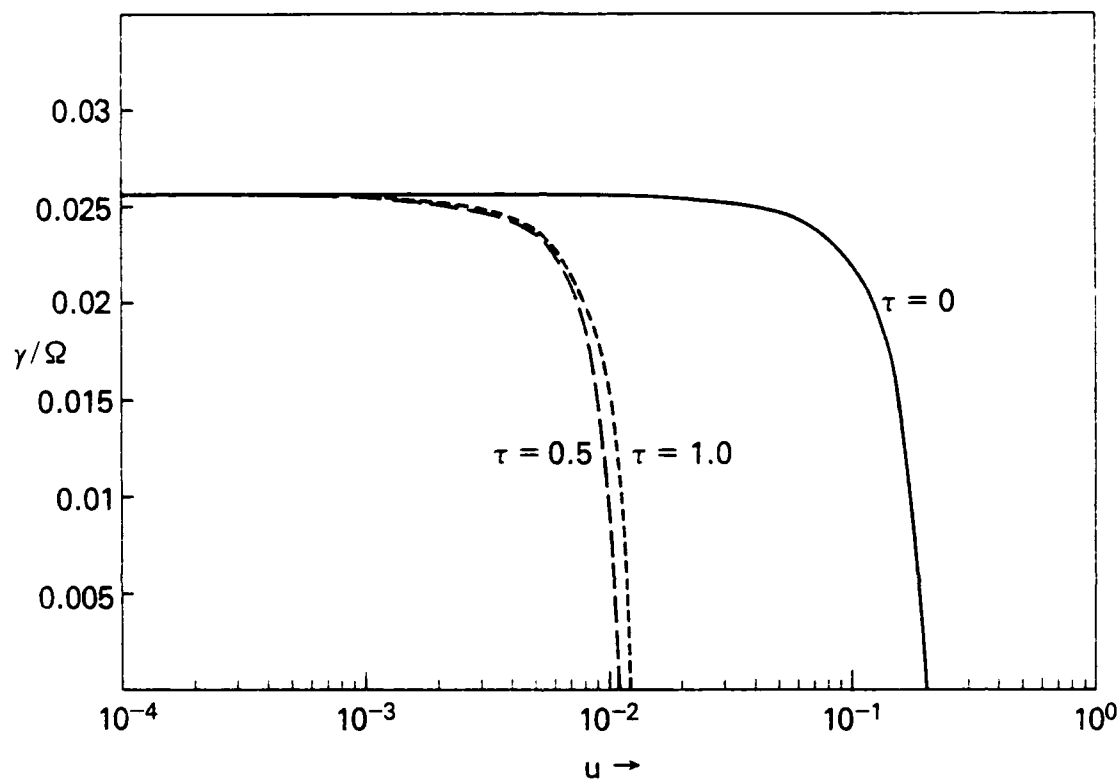


Figure 3. A plot of  $\gamma/\Omega_i$  against  $u$ . Here  $b = 0.57$  and other parameters similar to Figure 1.

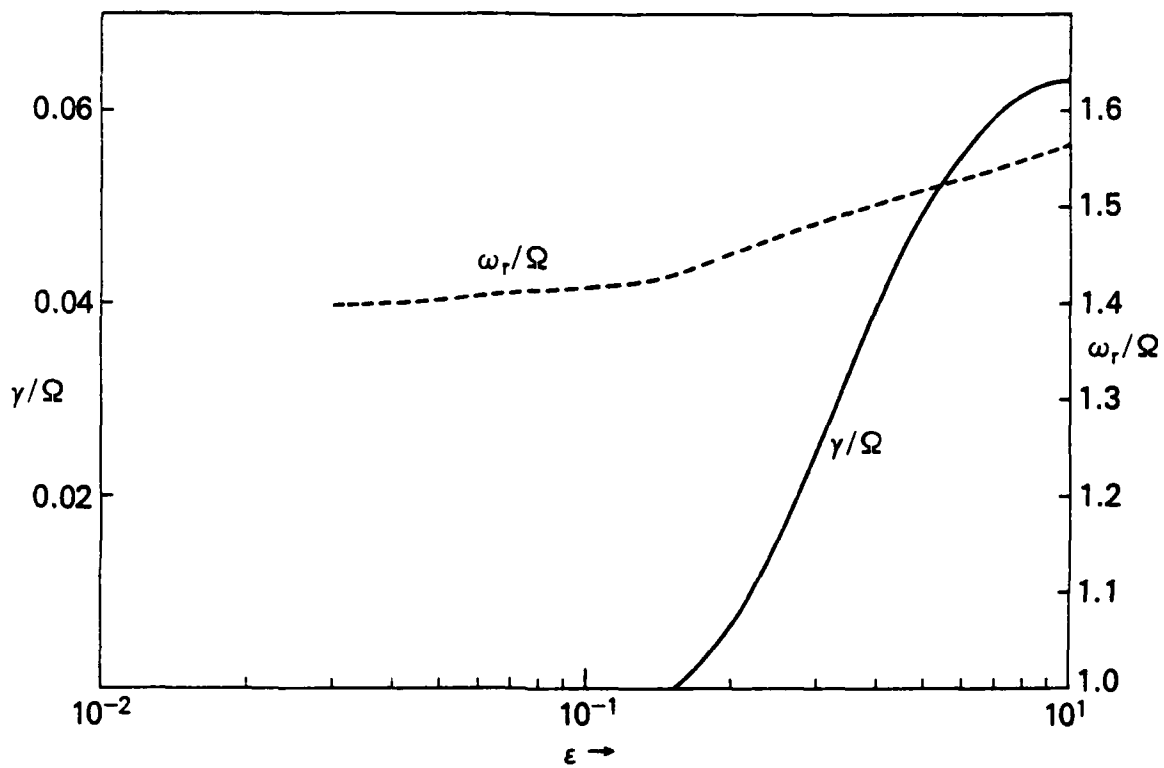


Figure 4. A plot of  $\omega_r/\Omega_1$  and  $\gamma/\Omega_1$  against  $\epsilon$ . Other parameters are similar to figure 2.

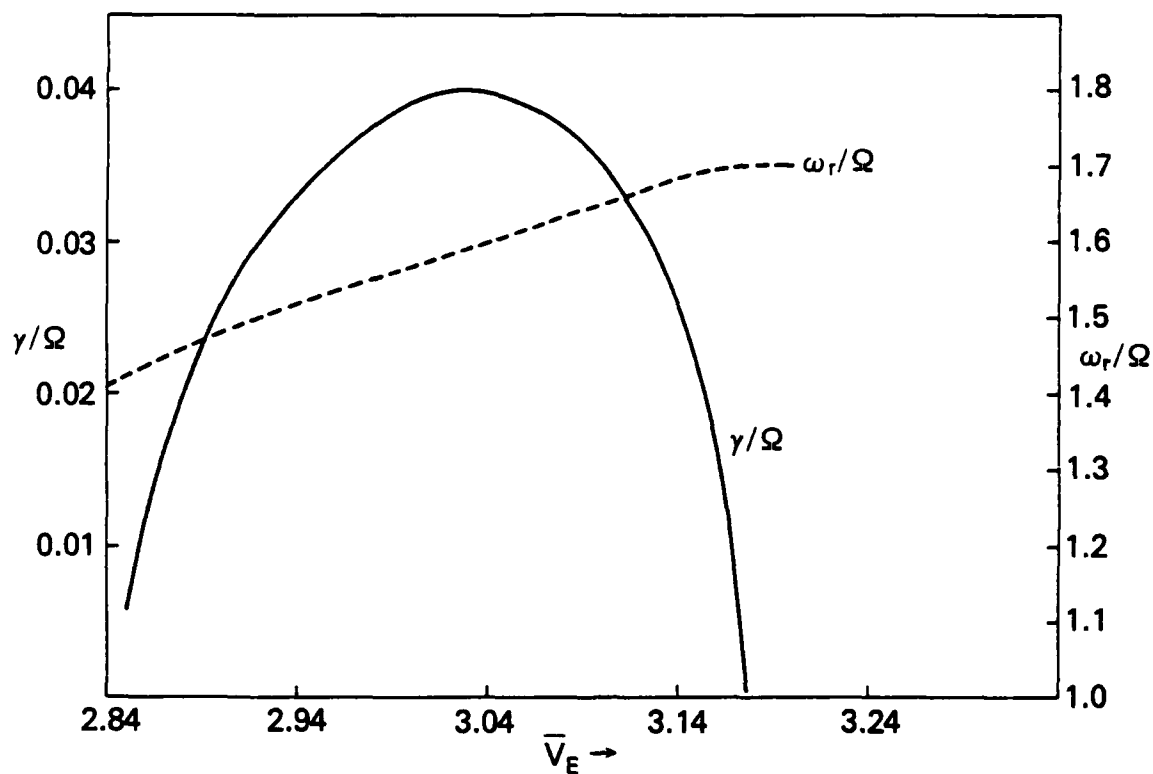


Figure 5. A plot of  $\omega_r/\Omega_1$  against  $\bar{V}_E$ . Other parameters are similar to the previous figures.



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S. Stalings  
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ATTN: M. Goldstein  
T. Northrop  
T. Birmingham

NASA/Goddard Space Flight Center  
Greenbelt, MD 20771  
ATTN: A. Figuero Vinas  
Code 692

TRW Space and Technology Group  
Space Science Dept.  
Building R-1, Room 1170  
One Space Park  
Redondo Beach, California 90278  
ATTN: R. Fredericks  
W.L. Taylor

National Science Foundation  
Atmospheric Research Section (ST)  
Washington, D.C. 20550  
ATTN: D. Peacock

Goddard Space Flight Center  
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Washington, D.C. 20546  
ATTN: Dr. E. Schmerling  
Dr. J. Lynch  
Dr. D. Butler

Klumpar, David  
Center for Space Sciences  
P.O. Box 688  
University of Texas  
Richardson, Texas 75080

Leung, Philip  
Dept. of Physics  
University of California  
405 Hilgard Avenue  
Los Angeles, California 90024

Lysak, Robert  
School of Physics and Astronomy  
University of Minnesota  
Minneapolis, MN 55455

Schulz, Michael  
Aerospace Corp.  
A6/2451, P.O. Box 92957  
Los Angeles, California 90009

Shawhan, Stanley  
Dept. of Physics & Astronomy  
University of Iowa  
Iowa City, Iowa 52242

Temerin, Michael  
Space Science Lab.  
University of California  
Berkeley, California 94720

Vlahos, Loukas  
Dept. of Physics  
University of Maryland  
College Park, Maryland 20742

Matthews, David  
IPST  
University of Maryland  
College Park, Maryland 20742

Schunk, Robert W.  
Utah State University  
Dept. of Physics  
Logan, Utah 84322

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